

Message Text

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OAS, SHUM

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN RATIFICATION OF AMERICAN CONVENTION
ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS, EDUARDO CASTILLO
ARRIOLA, DELIVERED GUATEMALA'S RATIFICATION OF THE
AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ON MAY 25. GUATEMALA
BECOMES THE EIGHTH RATIFYING STATE; ONCE ELEVEN STATES
RATIFY, THE CONVENTION COMES INTO EFFECT.

2. GUATEMALAN AMBASSADOR MADE A STRONG STATEMENT IN FAVOR
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PRAISED THE CONVENTION AS A FURTHER
STEP IN ESTABLISHING AN INTER-AMERICAN JURIDICAL BASE FOR
GUARANTEEING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS. WHILE HE
POINTED OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES AND THE INTER-
NATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR ASSURING THE EXERCISE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS, HE STRESSED THAT THE CONVENTION DOES NOT PERMIT
INTERVENTION BY ANY STATE OR THE OAS INTO THE INTERNAL
AFFAIRS OF A MEMBER STATE.

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3. GUATEMALA'S RATIFICATION HAD ONE RESERVATION: ARTICLE
4.4 WHICH PROHIBITS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR POLITICAL
OFFENSES AND RELATED COMMON CRIMES. GUATEMALA POINTED OUT

THAT ITS CONSTITUTION(ARTICLE 54) PROHIBITS CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT FOR POLITICAL OFFENSES, BUT ALLOWS IT FOR

RELATED COMMON CRIMES.

4. FOR EMBASSY GUATEMALA: SUGGEST AMBASSADOR AT APPROPRIATE OCCASION COMMEND FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA ORANTES FOR GUATEMALA'S RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION AND FOR STRONG STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR CASTILLO ARRIOLA ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE POSITIVE ROLE OF THE CONVENTION IN PROMOTING THEIR EXERCISE BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE HEMISPHERE.

5. COMMENT: GUATEMALA IS THE SIXTH MEMBER STATE TO RATIFY THE AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE VII OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN GRENADA IN JUNE 1977. THE CONVENTION WAS SIGNED IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, ON NOVEMBER 22, 1969 AND HAD ELICITED LITTLE INTEREST UNTIL THE STRONG PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS PUSH BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THE EIGHT RATIFYING STATES ARE: COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, ECUADOR, GUATEMALA, HAITI, HONDURAS AND VENEZUELA. NINE OTHERS WHICH HAVE SIGNED BUT NOT RATIFIED INCLUDE: CHILE, EL SALVADOR, JAMAICA, NICARAGUA, PANAMA, PARAGUAY, PERU, USA AND URUGUAY. THE PANAMANIAN AND PERUVIAN AMBASSADORS TO THE OAS COMMENTED AT THE RATIFICATION CEREMONY THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS ARE CONSIDERING RATIFICATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE ODDS NOW APPEAR FAVORABLE FOR RATIFICATION BY THE 11TH MEMBER STATE AND THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE
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CONVENTION IN 1978. VANCE

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